United Nations A/HRC/25/NGO/55

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 February 2014

English only

Human Rights Council
Twenty-fifth session
Agenda item
Universal Periodic Review

Written statement* submitted by the Arab NGO Network for Development, non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[17 February 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.14-11281

1411281

Please recycle

Human rights violations of Israel in Occupied Palestinian Territories and towards Palestinian Arab Citizens*

As the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) and the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) we welcome the commitment shown by the international community to take the Universal Periodic Review of Israel, on 29 October 2013, as another occasion to call Israeli government to give an immediate halt to occupation in Palestine.

Given that 2014 is the UN International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian people and marks 10 years since the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's apartheid wall and colonial settlements are illegal and that countries around the world are legally obliged to hold Israel accountable and not to support Israeli violations of international law[1], we reiterate our call to international community to pressure on the Government of Israel to end the longest occupation in history. This should include as well dismantling of settlements, demolition of the apartheid separation wall, and surely the fully lifting of the imposed siege on the Gaza strip.

While many of the interventions during the review session highlighted severe human rights violations that Palestinians face, we would like to note that development in Palestine won't succeed nor last without full enjoyment of the right to self-determination and the ability of the people of controlling resources and border crossings, including land and water. Indeed, systematic Israeli policies towards expropriation of Palestinian resources, deinstitutionalization of Palestinian economy and imposition of closure, results in severe socio-economic deprivation for Palestinians, hinders Palestinian development, creates increasing dependency on international aid and causes isolation and impoverishment[2]. This becomes the root cause of the violation of Palestinians right to adequate standard of living, whereby current figures show that approximately 70% of the Palestinian population continues to work to alleviate this alarming trend.

In line with several recommendations made with regard to giving an immediate halt to illegal settlements, we stress that continuing expansion of Israeli settlements, together with confiscation of properties not only constitute a breach of international law but also violates economic, political, social and cultural rights of Palestinians. By the end of 2012 around 650,000 Israelis had settled in the occupied Palestinian territory[3]. We reiterate that the obligations of Israel with respect to the right to adequate housing of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory include ensuring access to basic shelter and housing, and refraining from interfering with the enjoyment of these rights. Moreover, in the past ten years, 471 Palestinian houses and other structures have been demolished in Jerusalem affecting 1,634 Palestinians[4].

With an unemployment rate currently standing above 21% in OPT, the Israeli policies violation of the right to work is evident; including restrictions on movement, work permits and unequal and discriminative policies undertaken by Israel. The latter derives from continuous selective approach to employment opportunities implemented within Israel to the interest of Jewish population while discriminating the Palestinian Arabs and despite the Equal Opportunities in Employment Law (1988) (amended in 2010).[5] The discriminative Israeli policies continue as well on wage gaps, whereas approximately 12% of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel are paid below the minimum wage.[6]

During the review, the Delegation stated that Israel was working to improve the movement of people and goods and that there were only a few checkpoints in place, which were normally open. Yet, continuous cases of death en route to hospital signal the limitations on movement of patients and health staff[7]. Moreover, restrictions on importation of medical supplies, equipment and spare parts still continue and evidently limit the access of Palestinians to health

[1] http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/2014-begins-with-boycott-success-11650
[2] PNGO Submission for the CESCR 19th session, http://www.cesr.org/downloads/CESCR%20Israeli%20Violations.pdf
[3] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/FFM/FFMSettlements.pdf
[4] http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/780-palestinians-in-jerusalem-subjected-to-house-demolitions
[5] The Inequality Report, The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel by Adalah notes that only 2.4% of all industrial zones in Israel are located in Arab towns and villages. http://www.adalah.org/upfiles/2011/Adalah_The_Inequality_Report_March_2011.pdf
[6] E/C.12/ISR/CO/3, CESCR Concluding Observations, 2011
[7] http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/761-14-year-old-palestinian-girl-dies-en-route-to-hospital-after-delays-at-checkpoint

services, as well as of the professional development of staff[8]. In this regard, we acknowledge the WHO statement that "the only way to remove restrictions on access to healthcare is to remove the occupation itself"[9].

Last but not least, despite Israel's claim that "Israel place no legal restrictions on the right of organizations to engage in activities for the promotion and observance of human rights", Israeli authorities continue to practice arbitrary arrests and detention, raids, deportations, travel bans, visa denials and media attacks and restrict Palestinians human rights activism.

In light of these, we urge the Council members to reiterate their recommendations to Israeli government to:

- Give an immediate end to occupation and illegal settlements that stand as the root cause and obstacle for the self-development of Palestinian society
- Respect all United Nations resolutions and its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, with a view to guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms to all Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Comply with the recommendations received in UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, including that of the Committee on Economic and Social Rights
- Fully respect the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people, including their rights to life, to live in dignity, adequate food and housing, together with their freedom of movement.
- Given the importance of agriculture for Palestinian economy, give an immediate end to Israeli policies that hinders Palestinians access to their agricultural lands and water in all their territories.
- Put an immediate end to all kinds of obstacles such as restrictions on movement, work permits and unequal and discriminative policies undertaken by the occupying forces in the OPT, which hinder the right to work of the Palestinians

Finally, we call upon the Israeli government to accept all recommendations received during the review and to translate them into comprehensive, concrete and effective action.

---

*The Palestinian NGO Network NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

[8] http://www.emro.who.int/pse/palestine-news/5-years-gaza-blockade.html
[9] Stated by WHO Head of Office for the OPT, Tony Laurance, http://www.map-uk.org/regions/opt/news/view/-/id/1116/